

ON KNOWLE FOCUS

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Produced, Delivered and Funded by Volunteers. Printed on recycled paper. SPRING 2017

SAVE JUBILEE POOL

Long term residents will remember that 5/6 years ago the Lib Dems had to fight a battle with the Labour and Tory parties to keep Jubilee Pool open. Although we were the administration of the council at the time, we were hemmed in by a previous decision to concentrate purely on Hengrove and to close Jubilee. We disagreed, and by negotiating a new service contract for both pools with Parkwood Leisure, and investing in the mini-gym at Jubilee we were able to slash the subsidy needed and keep Jubilee open. In September this year the contract runs out, and without warning or consultation, the proposal in the budget consultation was to remove the £62,000 annual subsidy. By the time the Labour cabinet voted on this, closure had been added, and this was also passed at full council. An amendment put down by the Lib Dem group, and supported by the Tories and some Greens, would have saved the pool and other services by using financing savings, but this and all other amendments were solidly voted down by Labour.



A huge turnout of support at the recent protest rally

We are in talks with Parkwood, and together with the Friends of Jubilee Pool will be working hard over the next few months to increase usage. To this end we are delivering their leaflet with this edition. In parallel with that we are collecting signatures at several points and on line at <http://savejubileepool.weebly.com>. There are paper petitions all around the local area including the pool. We need 3,500 signatures to force a debate in council, in around 3 months, which we hope will be well attended by supporters.

We have no idea if the mayor is trying to grab the site for housing, and he has failed to reply on this, but it would be a very expensive site to redevelop, not least because of the large amount of asbestos (absolutely safe if not disturbed) on the heating system.

The operators are keen to continue to manage the pool and have indicated they can do it for less. There is a shortage of pool space in Bristol and whilst we support the resumption of work on the new Speedwell Pool, which was abandoned by the last mayor, it makes no sense to spend millions on the new pool whilst shutting an existing one for a tiny amount of cash.

If you want to help, contact us or join the Friends group (Nicola Skinner 07415975653) but even if you do not use the pool yourself please think of all the children and older users in the area that depend on Jubilee, and sign the petition. <https://savejubileepool.weebly.com>



MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT on the 4th May

On 4th May there will be an election for a "metro mayor", who will have the power to dramatically affect transport, planning and skills training issues in Bristol, South Glos and Bath and North East Somerset. He will have a budget of £30M a year mainly from central government. We make no secret of the fact that this "devolution" could, and should, have been handled a lot better by central government. The 3 councils reluctantly accepted the cash, with conditions, and North Somerset actually refused to join in. It is vital that whoever is elected to the position can work with all 3/4 councils and has good contacts with central government to get things done.

Partly because of the fact that Stephen Williams, the Liberal Democrat candidate and ex government minister is so much more experienced and better known than the Labour or Tory candidates, Ladbrokes have made the Lib Dems odds-on for a win, and the local media seem to have it as a close race between Conservatives and Lib Dems.

Whatever the party you normally vote for, it is vital that the unusual voting system is explained, as the only other times it has been used locally there has been widespread failure for electors to get the most from the system.

Everyone is entitled to a first and second preference. The first preference votes are counted and the top two candidates go through to a run off. All the votes cast for candidates not in the first two are then looked at, and if their second preference vote is for one of the two candidates still in, their vote is added on as if it was a first vote.

A hypothetical example - Of 5 sample votes cast -

- 1 Conservative who finishes first on first preference
- 1 UKIP who is eliminated, but whose second choice of Conservative gets added to above
- 1 Lib Dem who finishes second
- 1 Green who is eliminated, but whose second preference adds to Lib Dems
- 1 Labour who is eliminated, but whose second preference adds to Lib Dems

For these 5 - Lib Dems beat Conservative 3-2 but of course nobody knows for sure who the top 2 will be, so your second vote may not count. The point is that you will definitely reduce your chances if you do not put a second preference, and expressing a second preference cannot harm your first choice. So you can vote for which party you want but still have an influence upon the result if your first choice is out of the running.

The End of Local Democracy? With the ending of Neighbourhood Partnerships, as a result of the budget spending cuts, we are losing the opportunity for local decision making as well as local funding for community groups and events from the Wellbeing Fund. It brought neighbouring areas together to share problems and solutions and NP Forums were an opportunity to inform police targets and decide priorities for the neighbourhood. We hope that some form of local democracy will be created for the future and we will be campaigning for local people to have a continuing say in local traffic and policing needs. There was an attempt to claw back CIL money from local developers which was agreed for traffic schemes at Ilminster Ave, Axbridge and Woodbridge. Fortunately due to Chris' questioning the mayor on the legality of this action it was resinded the following day.

Like other groups the Friends of Redcatch Park lost funding expected from the Wellbeing Fund, but never daunted, they secured funding for their last artwork (on the toilets) from the Nisbit Foundation - a Bristol business supporting community projects. Wel done Friends. .

The mayor confiscates local park money

Under the parks and green spaces policy any money raised from land sold off, that was designated as green space, was to be 100% invested in parks and most of that was available for local parks. Knowle and Windmill Hill agreed to 2 land sales.

In Windmill Hill some land opposite the 3 Lamps on Bath Road, and in Knowle 1/3 of

Salcombe Road new play park and landscaping



Salcombe Road open space. (Another 1/3 was fenced for Knowle Park School playing field.) The remainder was to be landscaped and a play area installed. Some £787,450 was raised from the 1/3 sale of Salcombe and some of this was used to boost the investment in parks made just before the first mayor came in. The rest was considered by parks groups and Councillors locally and 8 further schemes were to get funding.

There were also schemes at Perrett's Park, Victoria Park and the green space outside Totterdown Methodist Church.

All of these have now been cancelled by the mayor which has a very negative affect on our parks but this will not solve his budget mess. It is ironic that his priority is supposed to be providing affordable housing and of course the Salcombe Road scheme provides 35 shared equity homes to allow people on low income to get on the housing ladder.

Redcatch Park new entrance and car park especially for disabled users and safer for pedestrians



New Redcatch Road pedestrian entrance and fencing



A Record of Hard Work



THE COUNCIL BUDGET

The list of cuts that the mayor has pushed through the council is so long that it would be impossible to list them all. This is not all the fault of the mayor but he must take responsibility for the choices that he has made.

Some of the headlines are; school crossing patrols cut, many libraries to shut but we do not know where yet, grants to voluntary organizations cut, local grants and local road safety schemes axed, but craziest of all is the announcement of the complete abolition of the parks budget over 3 years.

Prior to the first mayor we had a coalition government and a Lib Dem run council. There was a squeeze on government grants to councils as the government tried to balance the books. In Bristol the council tax was frozen and front line services were protected by reducing admin costs. So we had real government savings nationally and locally. Since the advent of the mayoral system we have seen maximum legal council tax increases every year, a massive reduction in services, and a failure to deliver on promised savings. The cuts to councils under the present government have gone too far And those combined with the present Bristol system being unable to cope will lead to real problems. The mayor promises more to come.

AROUND AND ABOUT IN KNOWLE

Increasingly concerned about the state of the old library site, Chris had talks with Broadwalk management about untidiness, and security following attempted arson. They were open to suggestions and this month action to solve the problems was put in place. Hoardings, sponsored by Broadwalk, were erected at the front of the library with wonderful art work completed as a project by Oasis Brislington School. (Chris has heard there could be a possibility of development of the site later this year.)



No 1 Redcatch Rd empty site - the developer says work should be moving forward this year.

More new businesses attracted to Knowle, filling empty units and bringing more employment - Sunbed Salon in the old money shop and Costa Coffee soon to open in the Coop Bank.

CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS - We are available every day not just at elections



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